

THE OUTPOSTS OF THE DESERT.

The French Exploring Party to the Sahara.

TOUGGOURT'S TRANSFORMATION

A Storm in the Desert—The "Bahr-Bela-ma."

THE BURIED GARDENS OF THE SOUF.

Preparations for the March to Rhadamès.

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A CLUSTER OF SUPERB PALM TREES.

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any salutation, with us. All made inquiries. The lively expressions are terminated by a series of "Ma, machi, machi" ("No, no"), pronounced with indignation for our servant. We found at last the key to the enigma, for which we might have looked a long time. These Arabs came from the country of the Chams, and they had been told at Touggourt that a disguised French priest had been seen to pass by, coming from Biskra. This missionary was going to Ouargla, to take five little negroes who had been bought at In-Calah by two missionaries from Algiers, who pretended to be Moorish doctors, and who, under cover of the science of the (medicine), entice unfortunate little creatures away, who are intended to become at a later period "apostles of the faith." All adds that it is owing to the impossibility of converting the Moors that it was they do these "very bad things," and that it was our foreign faces, and, above all, our arms—carbines and revolvers, such as the priest carried—which made them regard us as having come from the Place St. Sulpice.

The purchase of children for the purpose of educating them in their seminaries reminds me of another "benefit" conferred by the missionaries. In 1867, during the famine which desolated Algeria, the mission of Algiers gave the most generous hospitality to a crowd of children who were dying of hunger, and thus founded a nucleus of young proselytes designed in the future to convert Islamism. These were the very fortunate processors of the five little negroes of In-Calah. It has been enough to know that these people proceed in the same way throughout the whole world; but it will be submitted that it struck us as being rather too much to find them even in the desert. I do not wish to trouble myself more with these doctors without diploma, but not without object. But it will be admitted that through them any difficulties met us, who only went forward on a mission of civilization and civilization, and which would be deplorable to see the efforts of explorers hampered by people who come to thrust the Bible where the Bible has no business, and where roads and artesian wells can do much better.

A WHIRLWIND.

On the 29th all our preparations were made to enter Touggourt at two o'clock. The weather was cold, notwithstanding that a strong wind blew from the south-east. At Rhoma one of our camels, which was without sick, fell under its load. We divided the load among the other beasts and left the sick camel with the sheik. We reached the sand hills which precede by a few miles the capital of the Oued Rhr. The wind grew stronger in proportion as we advanced toward the south. At breakfast hour we tried to shelter ourselves behind a large cluster of tamarisks, but the whirlwinds increased and covered our provisions with sand. At noon we resumed our march. The temperature rose, and the wind was now from the south, but plenty of rain. It was raised up from the sand hills and formed a fog around us, which penetrated our eyes, our throats, our nostrils and our ears. The horizon was hidden from our view. Around us little sand hills were formed, which were increased or diminished by the caprice of the wind. Keeping in the saddle, with our faces buried in our burkas, we let our animals go as they pleased, and they stopped or stumbled by turns in their march through these torments. The noise created by all this chaos recalled to our minds that of the angry waves. It is a veritable sand storm—the sea without the water" (Bahr-Bela-ma), as the Arabs poetically call it, as they are struck with the aspect presented by the plains when the wind raises up the sand. Largeau explained to us tranquilly that the wind which was blowing had no connection with the simoon whose burning caravans he had received in the deserts which stretch between El Oued and Rhadamès. In fact, the wind which inconveniences us is fresh; but, although it is raised by a valley from small quantities of sand, it is none the less painful on account of its violence.

Our Arabs told the direction of Touggourt, with the exception of one, who was an old Turco. He ran over the tops of the sand hills, making us go around them and kept crying out to us continually to follow him. What made us most uneasy was the fear that the Aga, who had been told of our coming by one of our servants sent forward during the night, might do us the honor to come out and meet us, and we knew well that he would not be so kind. We were not so sure of our own weapons set the whole tribe in motion. Largeau told them he wanted to buy a sheep to replenish our stock of provisions, and while waiting for the delivery of the animal sent our horses and camels to the bordj to rest. The sheik having been told of our arrival sent his servants to us, who arrived out of breath to insist that we should retrace our steps, as their master would be very angry if we would not go and rest under his roof. We turned, therefore, to the right about and found ourselves soon in the house of Si Mohammed el Thebid, who recognized our explorers as having been his guest at breakfast in the month of January last, along with the Cadi el Oued Rhr. The sheik pressed us strongly to partake of the kous-kous and stay over till the next day. We declined the invitation and contented ourselves with drinking the kous (coffee), which he prepared himself, in order to do us the greater honor. After many salutations and passing of compliments with this amiable man and all his adherents, and after obtaining possession of the sheep, we took our departure in the direction of the oasis of Bidi Kheir, where we arrived that night. Our Arabs were short of provisions and orders were given to all to prepare them an enormous plate of kous-kous, and to make the feast complete, we also offered them the tana.

The next morning I surprised all attempting to empty my gourd of cognac. Largeau perceived at the same time that the rascal had emptied his, which he did not yet touch. Forced to explain, he said he had only drunk a few drops of it. He was taught a severe lesson. A shower of rain fell at last, and from leaving the bordj till after breakfast. All tried to secure a pardon by making a ragout of mutton in his just style.

On the 28th, after having passed the night in the BORDJ OF RAOUA, we passed through the oasis of Ourhiana during the morning, where we were received with every mark of respect by the sheik and his two spahis. Largeau brought us to see the modest monument erected to the memory of the lieutenant of spahis Lehaut, director of the artesian fountains for the Oued Rhr, who died on the 15th of May, 1860, at the hospital of Batna, of fever contracted in the Oued Rhr. Behind the monument runs the water of a well dug by M. Lehaut, the quantity it brings up now being 3,800 litres a minute.

Below the bordj we remarked the complete success of the last soundings executed last year by the sub-lieutenant of spahis Lillo, successor to M. Lehaut, and who is also suffering from an attack of fever at present. The quantity of water yielded by this well cannot be less than 5,000 litres a minute, and the level is above the average level of the artesian fountains for the oasis. Largeau remarked that in the course of eight months vast and sumptuous gardens had been planted in districts where there grew before but some sickly brushwood, and that plantations of palm trees, irrigated by the waters of the well, are springing up from the soil. The sight of this sudden transformation made him still more highly appreciate the truth of these words of the Aga at Touggourt—"If you wish to teach the Arabs how to make use of the system of sounding, before ten years the Oued Rhr will become richer than the Tell," which is the name applied to the cultivated region between the desert and the Mediterranean. To judge by what is passing at the present time in the Oued Rhr the time is not far distant when the Algerian Sahara will be covered with plantations. The transformation which Biskra and Touggourt are undergoing, as I have already told you, and the boring of artesian wells, which is daily continuing to the development of the oasis, are the proof of this assertion. Thanks to the artesian wells the cultivation of products is steadily on the increase. Perhaps, then, we shall be able to get all the tribes of Arabs, whose life and movements are so restlessly active—who change continually their encampments, and pass every summer in the Tell—to settle down permanently on the soil. A lively incident occurred to while away the time during the course of the day. At Bidi Raoua we were camped at four o'clock, the sheik came to take coffee with us. M. Louis Say showed him a globe which he had bought in order to make a present to the caliph of Rhadamès. The sheik ran at once to the village to fetch his friends and the sheik (learned) man to let them see "the earth." The Arabs were greatly astonished on perceiving that there was so much water in the world, while there was such a dearth of it in the Sahara. The evening was passed in giving lessons in geography, and we separated as old friends.

I had almost forgotten another incident less pleasant than the former, and which we would not like to see repeated, after all passing El Oued. Before our halt at Bidi Raoua we fell in with some Arabs who did not exchange the "salam alikum," the custom

the Aguerre, and to Si el Hadj Ahmed, chief of the Bagars, in which he asked them if they would kindly receive us in their territory.

FROM TOUGGOURT TO EL OUED.

EL OUED (SOF), Dec. 10, 1875. We quitted Touggourt on the 4th, accompanied by the Aga and his secretary, M. Pauchet, the son of a Paris merchant, a distance of about two kilometers from the town. We resumed our journey gayly, happy at having been able to pass some pleasant hours with a real friend of science, who is at the same time an excellent administrator, and who aids far to accomplish at Touggourt, in making it a kind of trial garden for the Oued Rhr, what Commandant Crouzet so successfully carried out at Biskra.

After crossing the slippery channel of the ancient river Igharhar, the wide marshy bed, which loses itself not far from here in Chott Mel Rhr, we once more entered the Chott, among small, sandy hills. In the evening we camped on a plain with large undulations, covered with a fine growth of sals, and where numerous flocks of sheep and goats were grazing. The night had been very cold, the thermometer having fallen to three degrees below zero (centigrade). We got up shivering, but as soon as we got on the march the sun rose and warmed us with his rays. In the afternoon we drew water at the well called Bir el Ferdjan, the water of which is very scarce and has a very strong flavor of sulphur. It is, unfortunately, the same in all the low lands of the Oued Rhr and of the Souf, where the Arabs take no precautions against the sand, which is continually getting into the wells, mingled with the excrement of the flocks which come to quench their thirst.

THE DESERT.

The next day at one o'clock we entered the sea of sand, in the middle of which are sunk the oases of the Souf. The sand hills, or rather the waves of this sea, were already imposing in appearance. From fifteen to twenty metres in height, they succeeded one another without interruption, and, as we were obliged to go around the greater portion of them, our march became slow and painful. On mounting the summit of one very high sand hill we had before our eyes the immense sea of sand. Fortunately the weather was magnificent, otherwise we should have had to endure a much stronger tempest than that which overtook us before entering Touggourt.

Not being able to reach El Oued that evening, we halted at Ouarbi, the first oasis of the Souf, at nightfall. Our camping preparations quickly drew around us the population of the oasis, who, at once notified the sheik of our arrival, and he, in turn, notified the sheik of the Oasis. He was followed by Mr. Lawrence Drake, who expressed himself as strongly in favor of rapid transit, and at an open court for the association to put themselves forward as opposing rapid transit, for the mind of the people was bent on it, and any effort to oppose it would be ruinous.

Mr. H. P. Smith said that his opinion was that the elevated railroad project would have to be fought in the courts. The question now was, "Are the property owners willing to stand together in the light of a legal tribunal?" He was followed by Mr. Lawrence Drake, who expressed himself as strongly in favor of rapid transit, and at an open court for the association to put themselves forward as opposing rapid transit, for the mind of the people was bent on it, and any effort to oppose it would be ruinous.

REVOLUTIONARY NOTES.

It was reported yesterday that the propeller Fall River, now lying in Gowanus Bay, has been purchased by M. O. Canine, of this city, the agent of the party of Hayti, which has General Brierley Canale at its head. Canale is now residing at Kingston, Jamaica. The following are the principal proportions of the Fall River—Length, 173 feet; breadth of beam, 33 feet, and depth of hold, 21 feet. She is of 632 tons, and was built at Boston in 1864. She is schooner rigged, and has her stern backed on and sustained other damages to the extent of \$400 or more. She was towed to Eastport, and will undergo repairs.

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ture. The capital of the Souf contains about 3,000 inhabitants. Since our arrival here it has been a continual procession of ships and crews, who come to salute us and bring us dates, oranges and confectionery. Our guide and our camel drivers are ready; and our preparations for departure are finished. We have inspected our arms, for we are going to shoot more gazelles than we can eat. A day's march from El Oued we shall meet them in flocks. Our camel drivers are all intrepid hunters, and know how to place themselves against the wind and get as close as they please to the gazelles to shoot them at a hundred yards. It is true that with their long guns they would find it impossible to reach them further off than that.

We start to-morrow morning, December 13, less superstitious than our Soufias, who did not wish to start on a Friday and who are still prejudiced against Sunday. On Saturday the indisposition of one of them obliged us to put off our departure. We were going to start at a hundred yards. The distance as a bird flies is only 400 kilometres. We hope to reach Rhadamès in fifteen or eighteen days. We can see some signs of progress, and will present that or by a modest (camel) courier, who could carry a despatch in four days to El Oued. Our journey in the ancient Cydame will not be longer than one month. On the road from Touggourt to Rhadamès we will only be ten days without water—but ten days among the sand hills, ten days of hardship. We are starting full of courage, and with the most entire confidence in the result of the expedition.

You will hear from me in three months at the latest. Salam alikum.

OPPOSING AN ELEVATED RAILWAY.

A meeting of the property owners opposed to the construction of an elevated railroad on Chatham street, the Bowers and Third avenues was held at the Grand Union Hotel last evening. Charles G. Dean presided, and Mr. B. B. Chappell acted as secretary.

After the meeting opened the secretary read the following as his special report:—The Commissioners appointed by the Supreme Court have closed their labors, so far as holding sessions are concerned, and will make up their report and present that to the Supreme Court for confirmation.

The Commissioners have also presented a bill of a large number of property owners, showing a damage of from twenty to fifty per cent should an elevated railroad be allowed to run through the Bowers and Third avenues. Also reports with affidavits from first class engineers showing that the proposed elevated railroad is impossible to build an elevated railroad upon the route named.

Mr. H. P. Smith said that his opinion was that the elevated railroad project would have to be fought in the courts. The question now was, "Are the property owners willing to stand together in the light of a legal tribunal?" He was followed by Mr. Lawrence Drake, who expressed himself as strongly in favor of rapid transit, and at an open court for the association to put themselves forward as opposing rapid transit, for the mind of the people was bent on it, and any effort to oppose it would be ruinous.

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